

# Aurora OKs agreement for new pedestrian bridge over Fox River

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Steve Lord

The paperwork for Phase II is finally finished, and the city is ready to bid the estimated \$14 million project to enhance the Aurora Transportation Center, which includes a new pedestrian bridge over the Fox River.

The City Council this week put the finishing touches on the Phase II work with approval of an intergovernmental agreement with the Fox Valley Park District for construction of a 900-foot curved pedestrian and bicycle bridge that will connect bike trails on the west and east banks of the Fox River, going over Blues Island.

The Park Board approved its side of the agreement earlier this week.

The agreement was necessary because the construction will take place on some Park District property. Stephane Phifer, Aurora planning director, said the agreement also spells out certain maintenance responsibilities between the two governmental bodies.

Phifer said the city will try to time work on the bridge — as well as any of the work on the Transportation Center — with the Aurora Civic Center Authority, which manages RiverEdge Park, "so it won't impact events."

"There will be some impact," Phifer said. "We are building a large bridge on the southern edge of the property."

The city is trying to get things in order to bid the project in January and start construction by May.

Aurora secured an \$11.4 million Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality grant from the federal government for the project.

It also will receive a \$2 million grant from the Kane County Forest Preserve District.

Earlier this year, the city received permission from the federal government to move up the project's timeline so it can start next year.

The bridge will be built at two elevations, with pedestrians using a lower elevation on the south side of the bridge and bikes using a higher elevation on the north side. In the middle of the bridge, on the island, the span will widen to create an overlook for people to view the river, island and downtown Aurora.

The bridge also will be illuminated at night and include some programmable lights for special occasions or even to match what is happening onstage at RiverEdge Park.

Part of the project also will add onto the southern portion of RiverEdge Park, creating a southern entrance and a beer concession stand. The beer stand at the park is being patterned after those at Summerfest in Milwaukee, which have proved to be successful, city officials said.

Other parts of the project include a total of 843 more parking spaces around the transportation center, with 123 at the station itself and 94 more in the lots on the west side of the river; moving the bus pulse point next to the train tracks; and relocating the traffic signal that is at the current entrance to the Two Brothers Roundhouse on North Broadway to the southern entrance of the transportation center.

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